

“Only ten cents’ worth of gold for the morning’s work of ten of us,” was the discouraged remark of the strong-lunged miner; and his “ten of us” meant only the men who share the mine, not the women and children who had helped.

Niya proved to be a pleasant town of about four thousand inhabitants. On the 17th of October, we found the shady lanes bordered by rows of thrifty poplars, still almost as green as in summer. The fields had apparently borne heavy crops, though all were now bare with the exception of the rustling corn-fields, whose half-gathered golden crop made spots of color on the flat roofs of the warm mud houses. The people were much like those of other places. They looked well-to-do and comfortable, though they mildly complained that the Chinese amban of Keriya had lately increased their taxes, and that their late Beg had oppressed them. After the polite and hospitable fashion of the Chantos, the new Beg invited me to go hawking. Accompanied by a merry party of friends, and by two retainers carrying hooded falcons on their gloved wrists, we rode down the river. Broad reaches of sluggish water invited wild duck to halt, and an open plain of low, grassy reeds dotted with feathery tamarisk bushes afforded shelter to numerous hares. The sport was poor, but the good humor and jokes of the hunters, and our exciting races after the falcons, put every one in high spirits. I realized what good fellows the Chantos can be, and how much they resemble ourselves in spite of certain weaknesses.

The Niya River is much like the Keriya. It is not strange that travelers have been deceived as to the possibilities